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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 46/23, which was adopted without a vote on 5 December 1991. In that resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to keep Member States and the Security Council informed of progress towards the implementation of the resolution and to submit to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session a report on the situation in Afghanistan and on progress achieved in the implementation of the Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan, 1/ concluded at Geneva on 14 April 1988 (hereafter referred to as the Geneva Accords), and the political settlement relating to Afghanistan.

2. My predecessor, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, reported regularly to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the progress in the implementation of the Geneva Accords and the political settlement relating to Afghanistan (A/43/720-S/20230, A/44/661-S/20911, S/20465, A/45/635-S/21879 and A/46/577-S/23146 and Corr.1).

3. The following paragraphs briefly review the developments that have taken place since the last report of the Secretary-General, the progress towards the implementation of resolution 46/23 and, in accordance with its paragraph 10, my efforts and those of my Personal Representative towards the realization of a comprehensive political settlement. The progress towards the voluntary return of the refugees and the activities of the United Nations system coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of United Nations Economic and Humanitarian Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA) are also described in the present report.

I. OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

4. The Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP), established on 15 March 1990, assists me in my efforts towards a comprehensive political settlement in Afghanistan. Until 7 August 1992, it was headed by my Personal Representative in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Mr. Benon V. Sevan. Since then, Mr. Sotirios Mousouris has been serving as my Personal Representative. OSGAP is organized into two small headquarters units: one in Islamabad, with a sub-office in Peshawar (which was closed as at 1 July 1992) and one in Kabul. The organizational arrangements for OSGAP have been most useful for remaining in constant touch with all segments of Afghan society and being kept informed of the complex political and military reality.

5. The Military Advisory Unit of OSGAP, comprising 10 military advisers, one each from Austria, Canada, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Ireland, Nepal, Poland and Sweden, is headed by Col. Patrick Nowlan (Ireland) and provides the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General with the military advice required to assist him in implementing the responsibilities entrusted to the Secretary-General. The military officers serving as military advisers are detached temporarily, with the concurrence of their respective Governments, from existing United Nations operations, namely, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Military Advisory Unit is responsible for providing military expertise, as required, and maintaining a continued assessment of the security situation in Afghanistan. The military advisers are organized into two small units in Islamabad and Kabul.

6. I would like to express my appreciation to the two host Governments, namely, the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, for their support and cooperation, as well as for providing the necessary assistance in ensuring the security and safety of OSGAP and other United Nations personnel as well as the United Nations premises. I also wish to express my appreciation to all other Governments for their continued support and cooperation. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments that have been providing military advisers to OSGAP. I also thank the civilian staff and military advisers of OSGAP for their outstanding performance under very difficult conditions and very often at great risk to their personal safety.

II. EFFORTS TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

7. At the outset of my term as Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a statement issued on 27 January 1992, I gave assurances to the Afghan people of my commitment to promote vigorously a political settlement in order to end the protracted conflict in Afghanistan, in pursuance of the mandate entrusted to me by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/23 of 5 December 1991.

8. I was encouraged by the widespread support that had been expressed for the United Nations efforts to promote a political settlement based on the five elements contained in my predecessor's statement of 21 May 1991 (A/46/577-S/23146, annex). I also expressed my appreciation for the resolution adopted at the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference, held at Dakar from 9 to 12 December 1991, which supported the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

9. Furthermore, in my statement of 27 January, I welcomed the decision taken on 13 September 1991 by the two Guarantors of the Geneva Accords to discontinue as at 1 January 1992 the delivery of weapons to all Afghan sides. I therefore called on all other Governments concerned to adopt similar decisions, emphasizing as well that there should be a halt not only to the supply of arms but also to the financing of arms purchases.

10. The time seemed ripe to encourage a comprehensive political settlement. I had been urged by a wide variety of Afghan representatives - including political, religious and tribal leaders, opposition groups, resistance commanders and prominent personalities - to convene a gathering of Afghans in order to agree upon a transition period, as well as the transition mechanism, leading to the establishment of a broad-based Government through free and fair elections. Support for such a gathering had also been expressed by the Governments concerned.

11. For my part, I stood ready to facilitate the convening of such a gathering outside the region with the participation of as many segments of Afghan society as possible. Accordingly, I made a determined effort to encourage all segments of the Afghan people, the two parties and the two Guarantors of the Geneva Accords as well as the Governments of the neighbouring countries to work towards a comprehensive political settlement in Afghanistan.

12. During the period under review, my Personal Representative had consultations with all segments of the Afghan people, including political leaders of opposition groups and resistance commanders, based in Peshawar, Tehran and inside Afghanistan, as well as with a multitude of eminent Afghan personalities residing inside Afghanistan and elsewhere. The Governments concerned were also consulted. In addition to bilateral consultations, my Personal Representative held, on 30 March 1992, tripartite consultations in Tehran, with His Excellency Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Siddique Khan Kanju, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. My Personal Representative also consulted regularly with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Mr. Ibrahim Saleh Bakr.

13. The majority of those consulted supported the convening of a gathering of Afghans with the participation of as many segments of Afghan society as possible. My intention was to call an Afghan gathering during the second half of April, at the United Nations Office at Geneva or Vienna, inviting some 150

middle-level representatives, acceptable to all sides, from all segments of the Afghan people, including representatives of political parties, religious and tribal leaders, opposition groups, resistance commanders, prominent personalities, emigrés and representatives from Kabul. However, a series of accelerated events inside Afghanistan changed the political and military situation in the country and led to the establishment of a new government.

14. On 15 April, President Najibullah informed my Personal Representative that he was prepared to resign that day in order to speed up the process of transferring power and was prepared to leave the country. President Najibullah resigned in the early hours of 16 April 1992, and later that day the Executive Committee of the Watan Party informed my Personal Representative that the Government was prepared to transfer power immediately to an impartial pre-transition council. Should that be unacceptable to the mujahidin groups, they were also prepared to transfer power to a mujahidin government. Soon after, the collective leadership established in Kabul after President Najibullah's resignation adopted a decision to transfer power to a mujahidin government.

15. Following events that occurred in Kabul in the early hours of 16 April, including the aborted departure of President Najibullah, I made a statement on 16 April, expressing concern about those events and my expectation that the safety of all United Nations personnel would be respected and that they would be allowed freedom of movement in and out of the country as their responsibilities required. My statement was strongly endorsed by the Security Council.

16. The former Afghan President sought refuge in United Nations premises in Kabul. His presence on United Nations premises has created a delicate situation, which can only be resolved with the goodwill and cooperation of all concerned. I have been given assurances by the Government of Afghanistan that the immunity of the United Nations premises will not be violated. I expect that the Government will stand by its commitment and that the matter will be resolved in accordance with international law and the recognized standards of human rights. In this context, I am encouraged by the fact that the Government of Afghanistan has repeatedly declared a general amnesty as part of its new policy. I have also kept the Security Council informed of this situation on a regular basis.

17. I had the opportunity to discuss the Afghan question, in Islamabad on 25 April, with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan of Pakistan, Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Muhammad Siddique Khan Kanju. In Tehran on 26 and 27 April, I also discussed the Afghan question with President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Foreign Minister Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati. I also met with the representatives of the Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan (Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami Afghanistan), an alliance of various Afghan resistance groups based in Tehran.

18. During these discussions, I emphasized that no effort should be spared in promoting national unity and safeguarding the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan. I also pointed out that the neighbours of Afghanistan, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, had a major role in helping the Afghan people in this respect. I stated that the establishment of durable peace and the maintenance of national unity were prerequisites for soliciting the necessary financial and humanitarian assistance from the international community. Regarding developments in Kabul, I emphasized the need for an immediate cease-fire, a declaration of general amnesty for all, respect for human rights and guarantees for personal safety, security and property. I also reiterated the readiness of the United Nations to assist the Afghan people in reconstruction and rehabilitation of their country.

19. Following the declaration by the interim leadership in Kabul to transfer power to the mujahidin, an agreement was reached in Peshawar, Pakistan, on 24 April, among most of the Afghan resistance groups, that Professor Sebghatullah Mojaddedi, leader of the Afghan National Liberation Front (Jabha-e-Najat-e-Melli Afghanistan), should initiate this transfer of power. He arrived in Kabul on 28 April as Chairman of the Jehadi Council and Acting President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. Transfer of power took place that day at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attended by a delegation of officials of the outgoing Government of the Republic of Afghanistan, including two Vice-Presidents, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and several members of the former Cabinet.

20. The new leadership under Professor Mojaddedi and the Jehadi Council proclaimed the establishment of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, declared general amnesty and introduced several institutional changes.

21. On 28 June, in accordance with the agreement reached in Peshawar, Professor Mojaddedi stepped down at the end of his two months term and was succeeded by Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, leader of the Islamic League of Afghanistan (Jami'at-e-Islami Afghanistan). Under the Peshawar Agreement, Professor Rabbani would serve for four months as the Head of the Islamic Leadership Council and concurrently as Head of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. Thereafter, an Islamic Council would be formed, which would decide on the form of the future interim government, which, it is understood, would hold elections within 18 months to two years.

22. Several Governments, especially members of OIC, voiced their support for the Council that took power in Kabul on 28 April. I pledged the United Nations support in rendering all possible humanitarian and other assistance to Afghanistan.

23. The establishment of the Interim Council in Kabul is a step forward in the political process in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the subsequent fighting that erupted in August indicates that a national consensus has not yet been achieved. On the contrary, fighting amongst various groups and military challenges to the Government caused a large number of casualties and vast

material damage to Kabul. Hundreds of thousands of city residents fled their homes and became displaced. The large-scale violence also endangered the diplomatic community and caused the death of two diplomats and two United Nations staff of Afghan nationality. Several Governments decided to evacuate their embassies either partially or fully.

24. In the wake of such violence, I issued a statement on 10 August appealing to all the parties to the conflict to exercise restraint, lay down their arms and begin a dialogue at once, so as to find a solution that would bring peace and security to their war-torn country. I stated that if the United Nations was to continue its humanitarian and other operations in Afghanistan, I would expect that the safety and protection of the United Nations personnel, property and premises would be assured. I also called upon the Governments of the neighbouring countries and concerned regional organizations to use their influence to help to end this tragedy.

25. On 12 August, the members of the Security Council expressed their utmost concern over the wide-scale fighting that had broken out in Kabul and that had already resulted in heavy loss of life and property, including to foreign missions and their personnel. They urged that the Government of Afghanistan take every measure to ensure the safety and security of all diplomatic and international missions, as well as their personnel in Kabul, and called upon all those involved in the hostilities to cease such hostilities and establish the necessary conditions for the safe evacuation of foreign personnel. On 14 August I renewed my appeal, and on 20 August I briefed the members of the Security Council on the deteriorating situation in Kabul. Under the circumstances, on 22 August, I decided to instruct the remaining United Nations staff in Kabul temporarily to evacuate the city. My Personal Representative arranged this evacuation and assisted in the efforts of the diplomatic community to obtain guarantees for this evacuation from the capital. The evacuation of United Nations personnel was completed on 23 August. Circumstances permitting, the United Nations staff will return to Kabul at the earliest opportunity.

26. On 22 August I had a telephone conversation with President Rabbani during which we reviewed the situation in Afghanistan. I assured President Rabbani that I would spare no effort in mobilizing international humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people. I recalled my consolidated appeal of 5 June 1992 to the international community for emergency humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan. I also informed the President that my Personal Representative, in consultation with United Nations agencies, was preparing an assessment of requirements for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan resulting from the latest round of hostilities. For his part President Rabbani gave me his assurances that his Government would use all means at its disposal to ensure the necessary measures for the safety and security of all diplomatic missions and United Nations premises as well as their personnel and property.

27. Concurrently, my Personal Representative cooperated with interested Governments in the area in encouraging the parties to the conflict to agree to a temporary cease-fire so as to allow diplomatic personnel safe evacuation

from Kabul. As at 29 August all diplomatic personnel who wished to leave Kabul were able to do so. Regrettably, on 28 August rockets were fired at the airport while Chinese, Indian, Indonesian and Russian diplomatic personnel were being evacuated; one aircraft was destroyed and four crew members were wounded, thus briefly delaying the evacuation of some diplomatic personnel.

28. In spite of these difficulties and the slow response to the appeals for a halt to the fighting, mediation efforts continued until a cease-fire was agreed effective on 29 August, although scattered fighting continued in parts of the city. A peace commission was created and a neutral Afghan buffer force was deployed between warring factions. Consequently, the security situation in and around Kabul has improved, permitting several fact-finding and technical assistance missions of United Nations international staff to visit Kabul for short stays. They had consultations with government officials and assisted the efforts to restore basic services.

29. While attending the summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at Jakarta in early September, I had the opportunity to discuss the situation in Afghanistan with President Rabbani, during which I reiterated the United Nations commitment to continue providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Subsequently I instructed my Personal Representative to make necessary preparations to meet essential needs during the forthcoming winter.

30. On 31 October the Afghan Leadership Council extended Professor Rabbani's tenure as President for an additional period of 45 days. The Leadership Council decided that the main task for President Rabbani was to organize and convene the Shura-e-Ahl-e-Hal-wa-Aqd (the Council of Learned People Who can Resolve and Decide), which is scheduled to take place on 10 December 1992.

III. HUMANITARIAN AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES FOR AFGHANISTAN

31. It should be recalled that in November 1991, UNOCA issued the Operation Salam Programme for 1992, with a proposed budget of US$ 133.7 million. This programme had been proposed following detailed consultations among all the participating United Nations agencies.

32. The rapid changes in the political situation in Afghanistan leading to the establishment in April 1992 of the Government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the consequent mass return of refugees from the neighbouring countries greatly increased the humanitarian needs of the country. I therefore launched, on 5 June 1992, a Consolidated Appeal for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for Afghanistan (June-December 1992), requesting donors to contribute $180 million for the emergency humanitarian needs of Afghanistan for the remaining months of the current year. This figure included an amount of $76 million, representing the shortfall in funding for the activities included in the original Operation Salam Programme for 1992 published in November 1991.

33. The continued shelling and rocketing of Kabul in the months of July and August 1992 resulted in large-scale destruction, claiming the lives of over 3,000 civilians and forcing thousands to flee to the north, east and south of the city in search of security. In order to address the most immediate needs in Kabul, the United Nations has been delivering, in consultation with the Government of Afghanistan, essential medical supplies and food aid to the capital for distribution among the neediest civilian population. Likewise, food aid, medical supplies and shelter materials have been mobilized from the United Nations offices in Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sharif to the thousands of displaced persons from Kabul who have settled to the north and east of the capital.

34. On 25 August 1992, my Personal Representative issued a Note on Immediate Needs in Afghanistan, in consultation with government authorities, the relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Note requested $10 million, within the context of the 5 June Consolidated Appeal, for the urgent relief activities necessitated by the hostilities in Kabul. The Note was presented to representatives of the donor community in New York, Geneva and Islamabad.

35. On 1 November 1992, a Note on Emergency Winter Needs of Afghanistan was issued, seeking a further $17.6 million for winter programmes within the context of the 5 June Appeal. The Note followed upon discussions with the President, the Foreign Minister and several other high-ranking officials of Afghanistan, held by the Personal Representative during his visit to Kabul on 21 October 1992. Based on these discussions and inter-agency consultations, UNOCA identified the emergency needs for the winter of the most vulnerable groups within four "life-saving" sectors: food, fuel, shelter and health. Increased donor support for humanitarian activities in these areas is urgently required in order to ensure the survival of many thousands of Afghans throughout the winter.

36. Although the security situation prevailing in Kabul and certain other locations in Afghanistan may be precarious, there are many parts of the country that have been living in relative peace. Were funds to be made available, the United Nations system has the capacity to provide the humanitarian assistance desperately needed by the Afghan people.

37. As at 30 October 1992, Governments had pledged or contributed an amount of $59.3 million towards the 5 June Consolidated Appeal. Despite the serious budgetary constraints faced by the United Nations system in Afghanistan, work by the agencies and programmes has continued. In the current year cooperation between agencies has continued, with inter-agency meetings being held regularly at both Kabul and Islamabad. In addition, all United Nations activities are presently being carried out in close consultation with the Government of Afghanistan. My Personal Representative has remained responsible, in his capacity as head of UNOCA, for coordinating the activities carried out within the United Nations system. In that capacity, he reports to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

Voluntary return of the refugees

38. The change of government in Afghanistan in April 1992, accompanied by the cessation of hostilities in most areas outside Kabul, led to an enormous increase in voluntary repatriations from both the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. In the first 10 months of 1992, nearly 1.5 million Afghans returned home. Some 60,000 new refugees arrived in Pakistan as a result of the fighting in Kabul (the Government of Pakistan estimates that approximately 30,000 refugees crossed from Afghanistan to Pakistan in August alone), but despite the late season, significant repatriation was continuing up to the end of October.

39. The voluntary return of refugees from Pakistan continued to be facilitated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)/World Food Programme (WFP) repatriation grant programme, whereby returning refugee families receive a cash grant of $132 and 300 kilograms of wheat to help defray the cost of transport and initial reinstallation. The number of refugees receiving the grant increased dramatically in May 1992 and has remained high. In 1992 alone, as at the end of October, 208,000 families, comprising over 1.2 million individuals, had benefited from this programme. Similar assistance for the voluntary return of refugees from the Islamic Republic of Iran to help defray the cost of transport and to provide 50 kilograms of WFP wheat per individual is expected to start on 1 December 1992.

40. Using the grant, refugees make their own transportation arrangements. Hundreds of vehicles loaded high with belongings have crossed from Pakistan into Afghanistan daily. During the months of June and July, as many as 10,000 men, women and children travelled homeward each day. Although the High Commissioner had not been able to arrange for similar assistance for refugees returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran before 1 December 1992, between one and two thousand refugees were repatriating from there each day in mid-1992. Over 200,000 refugees have already returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran this year and the High Commissioner is providing assistance in that country to upgrade border exit facilities.

41. The resources provided for repatriation and reintegration programmes have unfortunately not kept pace with the number of repatriating refugees. The 5 June Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan described the arrangements foreseen to assist repatriation and the integration of those returning and requested funds for direct assistance for 1 million returnees. It is now clear that despite the hostilities in Kabul and unsettled security conditions elsewhere, the numbers returning during the last seven months of 1992 will well exceed this number and that even greater resources are needed to facilitate their repatriation.

42. UNHCR has been frequently on the verge of exhausting the funds available for the repatriation grant project, with just enough money on hand at any given time to continue the project for a few more days or weeks. There has been very little left over for the urgently needed rehabilitation work in the

refugees' home communities. With the massive voluntary return of refugees, the interrelated nature of humanitarian programmes has been highlighted, with additional stress being placed on other essential sectors such as mine clearance, agriculture and health care.

43. The return of refugees to their devastated homeland is a moving demonstration of their confidence in the future of Afghanistan and in their own ability to cope with adversity. The Afghan people are well aware that the task of rebuilding their country will be arduous and UNHCR has found that the refugees are generally well-informed about the conditions that will confront them upon return. I am concerned, however, that unless the additional resources requested in the 1 November Note on Emergency Winter Needs to meet winter shelter requirements are forthcoming immediately, it may not be possible to avert severe hardship and suffering during the impending winter.

44. After months of discussion, the texts of agreements establishing two tripartite repatriation commissions, comprising representatives of the Governments of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran (one commission) and Pakistan (the other commission), and of UNHCR, have now been agreed. The principal objective of each commission is to facilitate the safe, orderly and voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees and their peaceful reintegration in Afghanistan. The agreement covering return from the Islamic Republic of Iran was signed on 31 October 1992, while the agreement covering return from Pakistan is expected to be signed shortly.

45. Despite the large numbers who have repatriated to Afghanistan this year, more than 3 million Afghans continue to live outside their country as refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and elsewhere. Conditions in parts of Afghanistan remain too unstable to warrant active encouragement to repatriate, as opposed to the current facilitation of voluntary repatriation by UNHCR. International protection and assistance therefore continue to be provided to those refugees who elect for the time being not to repatriate. The extent to which conditions can be created throughout Afghanistan that would allow all refugees to return in safety, and to receive at least the minimum necessary support on return, will determine both the success of the repatriation that has already occurred and the prospects for the return of the refugees who remain in exile.

46. Subject to an improvement in the security situations for the country, UNHCR estimates that about 1.5 million refugees will return to Afghanistan from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan in 1993.

Agriculture

47. The Operation Salam Programme made the rehabilitation of agriculture a top priority. Since January 1991, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has provided 11,200 metric tons of seeds and fertilizer as well as 600,000 fruit tree saplings. In addition, in the same period, more than 350,000 animals were vaccinated, 400 kilometres of irrigation karezes were repaired and technical assistance, chemicals and

equipment were provided for the elimination of locust and sun pest infestations in the north of the country. It is essential that these programmes receive increased support from the international community during the period of refugee return. However, although the 5 June Consolidated Appeal requested funds of $21.6 million for this sector, I regret to report that only $370,000 has so far been pledged towards these requirements.

Food assistance

48. In 1991, WFP distributed over 60,000 metric tons of wheat in Afghanistan through food-for-work, vulnerable group feeding and food-for-bazaar activities. With the mass return of refugees and increased population movements inside Afghanistan, as well as the cessation of bilateral food aid received from the USSR in the past, requirements for the food assistance programmes have increased considerably in 1992. In addition to relief aid, activities supported through food-for-work projects include repair and construction of roads, houses, schools, reservoirs and canals. WFP is also continuing to provide assistance to the refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, in addition to collaborating with UNHCR in the repatriation grant programme.

49. On 6 April 1992, in response to the deteriorating situation in Kabul, I appealed to the international community for 30,000 tons of emergency food assistance. Substantial food assistance requirements were also included in the 5 June Consolidated Appeal and the 25 August Note on Immediate Needs. As a result of these efforts, by 30 October 1992, WFP had delivered more than 27,000 metric tons of wheat to Kabul and other provinces in Afghanistan since the beginning of the year. The 1 November Note on Emergency Winter Needs indicates that, while WFP has adequate food stocks in the pipeline for the winter, funding is urgently required to cover transport and related costs. A total of $8 million is required to cover internal transport, storage and handling charges for 120,000 tons of food to be delivered during the winter months.

Mine clearance programmes

50. As refugees return to their homes, increasing numbers are being disabled by mines and unexploded ordnance. Figures provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) show conclusively that the number of civilians being injured by mines and seeking treatment at ICRC hospitals has risen substantially since repatriation began.

51. The mine clearance programme, a project executed by UNOCA, provides mine awareness training as well as actual mine clearance. During 1992, as at 30 October, 172,000 Afghan men, women and children received basic mine awareness training, bringing the total number of trained persons to over 800,000 since the inception of the programme. Almost 2,000 Afghans are employed in the mine clearance programme, clearing mines and other unexploded ordnance from access roads, villages, irrigation channels and agricultural land. Since the start of 1992, approximately 16 square kilometres in 10

provinces were surveyed and marked, and 6 square kilometres cleared. The 5 June Consolidated Appeal requested $15 million for this essential programme. As at 30 October 1992, only $5.8 million had been pledged.

52. Clearing mines is a very tedious and dangerous operation, which in 1992 regrettably took the lives of eight Afghan mine clearers and two British nationals working for the Halo Trust. In addition, 13 Afghans received disabling injuries in the course of their mine clearing activities.

53. It is estimated that up to 10 million mines of various kinds may have been planted in Afghanistan. In order to clear mines and unexploded ordnance from affected primary routes, villages and commercial and agricultural land, only a fraction of these mines would have to be destroyed at this stage. The remainder of the mined areas would be marked for later demining, where practical. Since the start of the demining programme in 1990 about 45,000 mines and unexploded ordnance have been destroyed and 20 square kilometres of land have been cleared. The result of surveys in 17 provinces and experience gained to date suggest that a further 60 square kilometres represent the highest priority task for clearance in order to enable most people to resume a normal, productive life. At present levels of funding, the mine clearance programme can expect to clear mines from areas totalling 10 square kilometres each year. At the current rate, therefore, this will take six years to complete, but if funding were doubled to $20 million per year, this could be achieved in three years. The demining programme has the capacity to expand in response to additional funding.

Health

54. The improvement of health facilities in Afghanistan is one of the most urgent tasks facing the Government of Afghanistan, for which the support of the international community is required. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) continue to undertake activities in the areas of disease prevention and control, essential drug production and supply, strengthening of health systems, drinking-water supply and sanitation, supplementary feeding and monitoring and information, with the support of bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations. The 5 June Consolidated Appeal identified emergency needs in the health sector totalling $30.6 million, but the shortfall as at 30 October was $25.9 million.

55. Complementing its ongoing activities in cooperation with WHO for the restoration and improvement of essential health services in Afghanistan, including the winter-related needs, UNICEF has also identified critical needs for winter fuel in Afghanistan in order to help to avoid a further deterioration of public health during the coming months. In particular, in connection with the 1 November Note on Emergency Winter Needs, UNICEF has indicated heating fuel requirements for hospitals, health clinics, orphanages and other institutions in Kabul and the provincial centres.

Drug control

56. There is a strong danger that the return of refugees may lead to an increase in the already huge production of illicit drugs in Afghanistan. While repairing their homes and putting back their land into cultivation, returnees in some areas may be tempted to guarantee some immediate cash income by planting opium poppy. To avert this danger, drug programmes were included in the Operation Salam Programme for 1992 and in the 5 June Consolidated Appeal. The United Nations Drug Control Programme foresees three methods of tackling this problem. Firstly, the Government will be encouraged to introduce strict regulations outlawing the production and sale of illicit drugs. Senior members of the new administration have already denounced the production of illicit drugs. Secondly, existing programmes supported by the United Nations Drug Control Programme to make the population aware of the dangers surrounding the abuse of illicit drugs will be stepped up and included in all United Nations education programmes. Thirdly, the support the United Nations agencies can provide for the repair of irrigations systems and wage payment for community work will encourage existing and potential opium growers to engage in alternative subsistence activities.

57. The United Nations Drug Control Programme is working with the Government of Afghanistan to prepare a comprehensive drug control strategy. It is hoped that developments in the political situation would allow for the implementation of such a strategy. However, even the modest request for $800,000 included in the 5 June Consolidated Appeal has not met with any response.

Rehabilitation

58. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to play a major role in many aspects of rehabilitation work. Indeed, some of the emergency rehabilitation requirements are so vital that, without international assistance, they may impede other important humanitarian activities. The preparation of a UNDP-sponsored medium-term rehabilitation strategy for Afghanistan was begun in the first half of 1992, but progress was briefly interrupted by the hostilities in Kabul last summer. The head of UNOCA is participating in the Rehabilitation Strategy Steering Committee in order to help to ensure that the transition from relief to development is a smooth one.

59. Commendable efforts are also being made by the many other specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system with activities relating to Afghanistan: the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UNDP Office for Project Services, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). In addition, the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) has more than 50 specialists working in Afghanistan, who are involved with most of the United Nations agencies and programmes in the country.

Floods

60. On 2 and 3 September 1992, floods caused by heavy rainfall in the Hindu Kush mountains to the north of Kabul struck villages along the Kalotak, Ghorband and Shutal valleys, killing many and destroying houses and agricultural land. A United Nations team from Mazar-i-Sharif immediately proceeded to the area to assess the damage and deliver emergency food, medical and shelter supplies to the affected population. As at 10 September 1992, the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs/United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) had received pledges totalling $180,000 towards the relief effort.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

61. The extent of human suffering in Afghanistan has been horrendous: more than 1 million dead, an estimated 2 million disabled, tens of thousands of orphans and widows, over 5 million refugees and more than 2 million internally displaced persons in a country that has been subjected to total devastation. It is tragic that in the aftermath of this enormous sacrifice and at a crucial time of transition towards normalcy, political stability and reconstruction, the people of Afghanistan had to experience more suffering and destruction resulting from hostilities in Kabul in July and August.

62. The influx of more than 1 million refugees during 1992 would create an emergency situation in almost any country, regardless of its level of development. Afghanistan, one of the world's least developed countries even before its devastating 14-year war, faces an emergency of immense proportions, which is only compounded by the huge rate of refugee return. Unlike other refugee situations, where efforts to encourage voluntary repatriation have encountered difficulties, we are facing a remarkable phenomenon with the world's largest group of refugees. Most of those returning home are doing so irrespective of the very difficult conditions inside Afghanistan, a country that under the present circumstances lacks the absorptive capacity to accommodate such high numbers of returnees.

63. It is thus all the more regrettable that the response to my Consolidated Appeal made on 5 June 1992 has been far from satisfactory. Unless the international community provides the minimum necessary funds, we may witness a disastrous situation by the winter. Apart from the serious financial crisis faced by the UNHCR in its voluntary repatriation programme, lack of funds has prevented the expansion of life-saving mine clearance operations, while virtually no new funds were available for such essential sectors as agriculture, irrigation, health care and the rebuilding of roads. The lack of funding for humanitarian activities has potential consequences that are exponential rather that arithmetic. Unless needs can be adequately and effectively addressed in the early stages, the possibilities for overcoming the humanitarian emergency in Afghanistan in the foreseeable future will be limited.

64. At the present time, there is a serious situation developing not only concerning the returning refugees and the displaced persons, but also for the population as a whole. Assistance is necessary not only to help Afghans to rebuild their lives, but also, in some cases, for basic survival. Without the necessary assistance to the countryside, there will be a rush to the already explosively overcrowded urban centres, overwhelming rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts following years of destruction and causing further serious economic and social crises. In this context, a new inter-agency assessment of the humanitarian situation will be undertaken in the coming weeks with a view to preparing a further consolidated appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance, to take effect from 1 January 1993.

65. Operational constraints in Afghanistan continue to be experienced owing to unstable security situations. Even though the remaining international staff of the United Nations system in Kabul were evacuated for security reasons, the United Nations has gradually strengthened its presence in other provinces in the country. In this regard, I would like to pay a special tribute to the brave and dedicated efforts of all United Nations personnel, as well as those of the non-governmental organizations working with the United Nations to bring humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people, who are performing their duties often at great risk to their personal safety. It is my hope that the current cease-fire and the efforts of the Government to broaden its political base will improve the security situation in the country, and that the people of Afghanistan will at long last be able to conduct the political processes necessary for lasting peace, stability and reconstruction of the country.

66. Since the signing of the Geneva Accords in April 1988, the fundamental premise guiding the United Nations in its efforts to encourage a political settlement in Afghanistan has been that the will of all the Afghan people must be respected, without any external interference. In this connection, the United Nations has always acted as a catalyst and a facilitator for the Afghan people themselves to resolve their differences politically. I have repeatedly emphasized that, whatever the plan, the Afghan people alone should determine their future, through a strictly Afghan political process, free from foreign interference. In this context I took note of the suggestion of the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly that Afghanistan may request the United Nations to supervise the proceedings of the planned assembly of representatives of the Afghan people. It is essential that any political process be fully representative of the diverse segments of Afghan society.

67. The Peshawar Agreement reached on 24 April contains ingredients from the five principles contained in the Secretary-General's statement of 21 May 1991 (A/46/577-S/23146, annex). However, despite the relatively peaceful transfer of power on 28 April 1992 in Kabul, a continuation of violence has regrettably complicated the establishment of a new government. I remain deeply concerned about the intermittent fighting between different groups, particularly in Kabul, which was subjected in August to indiscriminate rocket and artillery fire, causing large numbers of casualties.

68. I appeal to all Afghan leaders and groups to put the interest of the Afghan people above all else, for the sake of the unity of the nation and the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. It is essential for all to concentrate on a dialogue to resolve their differences peacefully and address the concerns of all segments of the Afghan society. The need for the establishment of a broadly representative government through peaceful and democratic procedures based on the will and the traditions of the Afghan people remains essential. This is the time for understanding, forgiveness and the healing of wounds.

69. Prisoners of war, Afghan and non-Afghan, including former Soviet servicemen, continue to be held by various groups. Provision of information on the fate and condition of these persons is essential; their humane treatment and their release should be ensured. ICRC stands ready to provide assistance in that respect. I therefore appeal to all sides urgently to release these prisoners, on humanitarian grounds, so that they can return to their families. It is essential that this sad chapter of the war be closed.

70. I welcome the declaration of general amnesty made at the time of the transfer of power on 28 April 1992, an amnesty that should apply to all. In addition, it is essential to provide guarantees of safety and security for all Afghans, respect for human rights, and protection of personal property.

71. The international community has consistently reaffirmed the right of the Afghan people to determine their own future and form of government free from outside intervention. I appeal to all Governments concerned to support a political process in Afghanistan that would promote national unity, safeguard the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and respect the right of the Afghan people to decide their own future. Any action to the contrary will have serious political and security implications not only for Afghanistan but for the whole region. It is also evident that the developments in Afghanistan should not negatively affect the stability and security of neighbouring countries.

72. What is urgently required is that international efforts on behalf of Afghanistan focus on the country's massive needs in the humanitarian, economic and social sectors, in order to allow the Afghan people to consolidate peace with rehabilitation and reconstruction. Assistance would be required for activities ranging from demining, which is a prerequisite in a number of areas for the revival of agriculture and transport, to promoting formal and informal processes of political participation. In brief, what Afghanistan needs now is what I called "post-conflict peace-building" in my report to the Members of the United Nations, An Agenda for Peace (A/47/277-S/24111). The United Nations stands ready to continue providing as much assistance as it can to enable the people of Afghanistan, who have suffered so much and for so long, to meet the challenges before them.

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-third Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1988, document S/19835, annex I.